

1st Meeting. Present Bersins, Meierovics, [ ] N.Y.C. May 23-25 '51

General conversation regarding the present Latvian emigre set-up brought about a lengthy discussion of the problems of the newly arrived DP's those remaining in Germany, and the lack of unity in the Latvian emigres. This brought the conversation to those Latvians still remaining in their homeland and how they may be faring at the present time.

Although Bersins claimed to have little news on this particular subject, he informed of the contact group in Sweden which has had some contact with the homeland until 1949, but has not had any worthwhile contact in the past year, or two. On the other hand Bishop Runcans has stated that a Latvian underground emissary was to have visited him in 1950; he was quite perturbed that nothing came of this. Nevertheless, that was the last known news of the underground or news that any such thing existed. Bersins claimed that tighter Russian security regulations have no doubt split any organised resistance (of an underground nature) to a point where today it probably consists of a few partisan bands, hiding in the woods and unable to undertake anything of consequence.

In answer to the question as to how the underground or any remnant thereof could be aided, Bersins stated that at the present time the most vital aid was of a material nature, such as sending first of all medical supplies, then arms and ammo, and food. Such could be accomplished by air drops. This led to a general discussion of agent recruitment and availability. According to Bersins and Meierovics, such Latvians could be located, however, it would not be an easy task. Accordingly Bersins offered his recently created Latvian Information Center (N.Y.C.) as a recruiting organization. When asked if this would entail any political

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involvement Bersins stated that in his opinion such need not take place, yet the US should begin to think of the future and help a unification of the political emigre being as a stepping stone to more effective fight against communism. Some day the US authorities will need a strong Latvian emigre body.

Further discussion of the actual implementation of the Info Center as a recruitment agency revealed that Bersins would alert a few very trusted members who work for the center in their spare time and receive no remuneration, to be on the look-out for suitable Latvians. He would then get such names and turn them over to Meierovics who would turn them over to the case officer.

Future secure meeting possibilities with Bersins and Meierovics were discussed with the understanding that Bersins would call our front office sterile phone number, collect, and ask for [ ] Future use of Meierovics as a "contact man" for the case officer and Bersins was discussed with no commitments having been made and no decision arrived.

2nd Meeting Present Bersins, Meierovics, [ ] Baltimore June 17. 51

Bersins brought about a renewal of unification talks. He requested permission to discuss such matters with Klive and Blodnieks and later with Bishop Rancans. He again promised not to reveal the conversations dealing with agents to anyone. In his opinion no Latvian would attempt to recruit and train agents for dispatch unless there was some political motivation behind it. The reason for it is obvious: a Latvian sent to Latvia would be an emissary from the people on the outside to the people on the inside.

Obviously no partisan or underground member, who has lived like a hunted

animal, would believe another Latvian if he suddenly appeared out of nowhere, that he was sent by the US. They would suspect Soviet treachery and no amount of convincing would be sufficient - including a radio set. However, an emissary bearing tidings from an organized body would be more readily accepted, especially if he brought a picture of himself with a group of well known Latvians and a proclamation in the handwriting of several of these known personalities. This could be checked by the local people. American goods, etc. would never be as convincing because Russians have been known to have received US material during the war. On the other hand, no Latvian living on the outside could ever be induced to give his signature to such a thing to anyone who could not be trusted. Asked how such an emigre unification could be accomplished Berzins could offer little in a constructive way. The case officer proposed a brand new body which would contain deputies of all existing factions and parties which had more than 100 members. This was turned down by Berzins, with the explanation that something new, such as that could never be accomplished. In fact he stated that such a new organization would loose its political implementation and become nothing but a modified version of the case officers original proposal of a covert recruiting body.

In this he appeared to have guessed the case officers true motives. He could offer no real solution to the problem at the present time and requested permission to discuss this unification business with Klive and Blodnieks as well as Rancans. This was granted providing that the source [ ] would not be revealed and the US government would not be brought into the talks. Also the fact that Meierovics was participating would be kept secret. In addition Berzins mentioned that he could not visualize a Latvian of any importance undertaking such a venture (recruitment) and the responsibility that

comes with it, without informing his party (in the case there was no organized political body) of his efforts in behalf of Latvia in a general tone. He did not intend to reveal any details, but merely wanted to state that he is engaged in work that may prove beneficial to the people in the homeland or something as vague as that. Even this was more or less a shot in the dark as he admitted that he could really not say much without discussing this further.

3rd Meeting. Present Bersins, [ ] Baltimore July 14, 51.

Now Bersins appears to have formulated some definite plans. According to him the entire business may be easily resolved by utilizing his Info Center for recruitment, a military section under an acceptable mil. personage for training and readying for dispatch, and the entire business would be part of a politically unified group. He has enlisted the aid of several Latvians for the purpose of giving him a solution to the problem (Klive, Rancans, Blodnieks, Feldmans, Laimins). It should be noted that he is sincere, more so than he was at the previous meeting, and has even picked political opponents for this task. He was emphatic about Col. Janums, that is he is the only mil. figure that would be unacceptable to all.

Since his whole bearing was more optimistic than ever before, it seems that we may be nearing a solution.

[Checked] [ ] and reported progress made. Answer go ahead.

4th Meeting. Present Bersins, Neierovics Baltimore July 21, 51.

Bersins arrived with good news. All queried seem agreed the best possible

solution would be recreation of the Latvian National Council (LCP). This council has been opposed by some Latvians, but would be a natural, having been organized in 1943 and served as the first organizer and supporter of the subversive Kurelis group. Based on Lat constitution of 1922 and represents all major parties. Although at present unacceptable, to some, would be made acceptable to most all in the whole world, if it were broadened. Since basis, ie constitution does not permit this, it will be necessary to form a committee which would then include all members LCP and also add all newly formed organizations in the world. Lengthy discussions of all personalities was conducted. Some unacceptable mentioned, but obvious. Again unacceptability Col. Janums brought out by both Meierovics and Berzins.

Need for all this was again brought up by case officer. Couldn't we get along without this. Unfortunately this damped Berzins spirits and caused him to clam up to a certain extent. However his good spirit was again aroused by mentioning the need for a budget as proposed by the aforementioned. He promised this would be sent by mail.

He then proceeded to draw up a list of all participants in this group. Odd that he is including political opponents - could he be as sincere as to shelve all or at least a major part of his ambitions for personal power? This will come out soon.

Since the LCP membership stands fast, the only political maneuvering that may come about would manifest itself in the committee to be formed - the Latvian Liberation Committee (LAK). Broke up very friendly.

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5th Meeting Present Bersins, Meierovics, [ ] Washington Aug 15, 51.

Bersins presented the "revised" list of members of the future committee (LAK). This is now quite different as it was in the beginning. Bersins political ambitions seem clear now - he has now a list of his followers which would give him a good margin of majority in any voting. He was informed that this was not acceptable and gave up soon enough, although a few feeble attempts were made for an alternate solution. The whole matter was resolved by telling him that the participants in the LAK would be voted upon by the LCP. He gave up - there seemed no way out.

He reported the turn Klives talk with Rancans had taken. Rancans has been instructed by Cardinal Spellman to cease taking an active part in Latvian politics and confine his activities to his clerical duties. As a result Rancans has told Klive that he (Klive) can do most of this in his name. He has further promised to give this in writing if necessary.

Although the talk ended somewhat strained because Bersins has lacked to achieve the "thanks" he felt he deserved (by getting a majority for himself), it seems that he has "left the door open" for future friendly cooperation. Anyway, no serious complication is expected from this.

Subsequent to Bersins leaving, Meierovics expressed the feeling that we have stymied the political sharpie. Also he feels that now that Bersins knows he is not dealing with children, he will not attempt another such maneuver. The case officer did expect some move or other on Bersins part, yet it came a little sooner than expedited. Anyway, it proves that Bersins needs watching. It is hoped that Meierovics will accomplish this.

Bersins was also informed that if any "foul play" would creep into any of the business, the funds will immediately cease. Believe this was the

clincher to the whole thing. He won't try again.

Let's hope his attitude will still be as friendly as it has been.